



**Montana Fish,  
Wildlife & Parks**

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## **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST**

### **PART I. Purpose of and Need for Action**

**1. Project Title:** Mission Valley Shooting Club, Inc.

**2. Type of Proposed Action:**

Build a new Pistol Range adjacent to the current rifle range.

**3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:** The Mission Valley Shooting Club is located 3.5 miles west of Ronan and 12 miles south of Polson, in Lake County Montana. The range is just north of Round Butte Road and west of Leighton Road. The shooting club property is leased from the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, Flathead Nation in Pablo, MT. It consists of a tract of land located in the E1/2SE1/4NE1/4, and the South 800 feet of the E1/2NE1/4NE1/4, of Section 33, T21N, R20W, P.M.M. and contains approximately 20 acres more or less. See figure 1 for approximate location to Ronan, MT.

**4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action:** MCA87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) MCA87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The 2007 Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges for public purposes. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

**5. Need for the Action(s):** The current shooting club consists of a covered outdoor 300 yard range, a 100 yard indoor range, and a 22 rim fire only range. Rifle and pistol shooting simultaneously is not always feasible on these ranges and having separate rifle and pistol ranges are more efficient and practical. Local law enforcement agencies do not have adequate pistol range facilities available to meet their training objectives.

**6. Objectives for the Action(s):** Provide additional shooting activities and improved range

safety. The overall objective is to expand the shooting range(s) to provide a variety of safe shooting opportunities. All design and construction objectives are to improve safety through separation of each type of range feature and their impact areas from other ranges. The overall objective, of the proposal, will be to expand from a joint rifle and pistol range to separate rifle and pistol ranges. New pistol range to provide increased law enforcement training capabilities.

## 7. Maps and Supporting Figures:

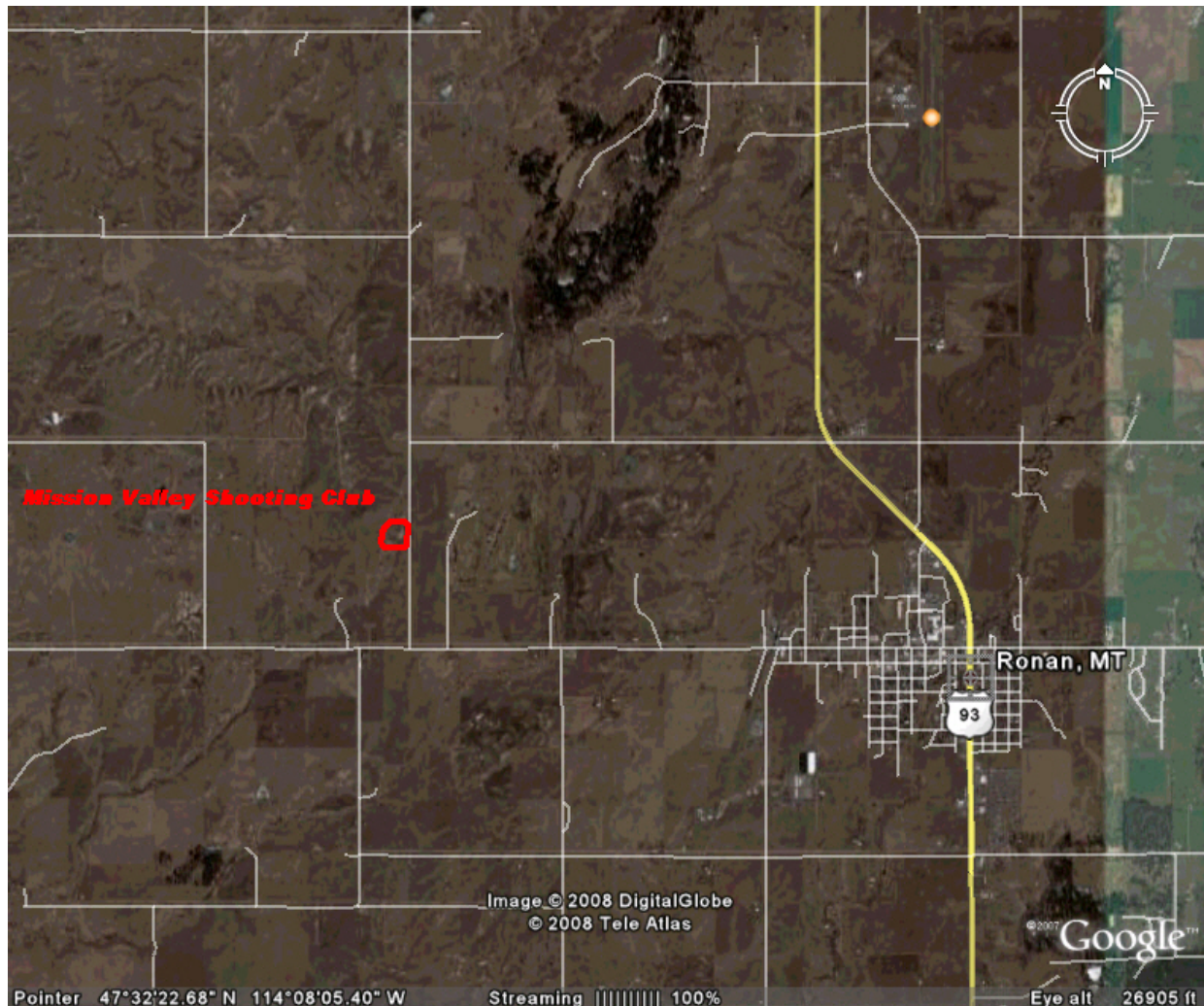


Figure 1 – Mission Valley Shooting Club, Ronan, MT



**Figure 2 – Mission Valley Shooting Club with proposed expansion in Red**

**8. Project Size: Estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected:**

The leased area for the ranges is approximately 20 acres, with improvements safely spread out within the leased properties. (Figures 1 and 2).

**9. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project):**

The area affected is the existing Mission Valley Shooting Club, which has been in place for approximately 11 years. The historic and present land uses are primarily livestock grazing and the existing shooting range. Miller Coulee runs north to south about 75 yards from the west end of the proposed range site, but no delineated wetlands on the site. (See Figures 1 & 2).

**10. Description of Project:**

The general range expansion and improvement project is to build new pistol range (See paragraph 2). Request for FWP funding for proposed projects listed in paragraph 2 will require:

- Building dirt berms
- Fencing the firing lines

- Purchase of gravel, ground cloth and steel targets

The pistol range will be well drained, level, firm packed gravel, making it more accessible for the handicapped and others. Future follow-on projects will be to upgrade the range with a concrete shooting pad and sidewalks, making it even more handicapped accessible.

Targets are AR500 Steel Targets, which is essentially hardened or armor steel, giving them a life expectancy in excess of 10 years.

In Accordance With (IAW) contracts agreements with Fish, Wildlife & Parks, all projects are to be completed by June 30, 2009.

**11. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:**

**(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:**

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Permit</b>
N/A	

**Funding:**

<b>Agency Name</b>	<b>Funding Amount</b>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$3,360

**12. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups:**

The Mission Valley Shooting range is a membership fee range, with daily range and visitor fees. Local law enforcement agencies generally use the range twice a year for qualifications. The local Cowboy action shooting club holds events approximately 3 times per year. Hunter Education classes also use the range for training at least twice a year at no charge.

**13. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement:**

Proposed range improvements proposals have been discussed within the membership of the club and with the associated project vendors and contractors.

**14. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:**

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**15. Name, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:**

Monty Lucht, PO Box 431, Ronan, MT 59864

**16. Other Pertinent Information:**

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range funding assistance. Resolution Date: April 29, 2008

## **PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

**Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas)**

**Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.**

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

**2. & 5.** There are no delineated wetlands on the property, but there is a creek (Miller Coulee) that runs north to south about 75 yards from the west end of the addition.

**Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.**

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		#4
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		#9
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

**Comments** (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

**4.** The surrounding land ownership is private and the range is leased from the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes. Past and present land uses are primarily livestock grazing.

**5.** Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large. The range is fenced with No Trespassing signs and access is through a locked gate.

**7.** Range will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, and public shooting.

**9.** The nearest neighbors to the range are North ¼ Mile, East 1/3 Mile, South 100 yards, West ½ Mile. In the ten year history of the range there have not been any significant range conflicts with the neighboring residences.

### **Part III. Environmental Consequences**

**Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur?** NO

**Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant?** This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

#### **Identification of the Preferred Alternatives:**

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in paragraph 10 (Description of Project) to build a pistol range adjacent to the existing rifle range.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Sports Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active rifle & pistol range without proposed expansion and improvements.

**Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:** Two alternatives have been considered, **A** (Proposed Alternative) and **B** (No Action Alternative). There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent.

Neither the proposed alternative (**A**) nor the no action alternative (**B**) would have any significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

- There are beneficial consequences to Acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)** increasing shooting sports opportunities on the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribal lands and the Ronan area are to build a pistol range on the existing leased club properties.
- The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be not to expand the range with additional shooting opportunities and to continue on with present shooting activities and facilities. Land use would remain the same. Present activities include a rifle range without the addition of a pistol range. Therefore the proposed alternative is the prudent alternative.

**Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:**



NONE

**List and explain proposed mitigative measures (stipulations):**

NONE

**Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:**

Monty Lucht, PO Box 431, Ronan, MT 59864

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

**PART IV NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT**

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being proposed are on properties leased from The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes by the Mission Valley Shooting Club. The low impact activities proposed, and the increased recreational opportunity, all indicate that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative (A). The 11 year history of the Mission Valley Shooting Club providing shooting opportunities to its members and the public indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the modernization and expansion proposals outlined in Para. 2 & 10.

**EA prepared by:** GENE R. HICKMAN

Ecological Assessments

Helena, MT 59602

**Date Completed:** June 22, 2008

**PART IV. EA CONCLUSION SECTION**

**Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:**

None required.

**Describe public involvement:**

Announcement for EA comment will be published in the Valley Journal and on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website to allow an opportunity for public review. Additionally the EA will be available for review on the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks website starting July 8 and comments will be taken until 5 pm on August 8, 2008.